

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

January 2013

Sask Rivers School Division

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

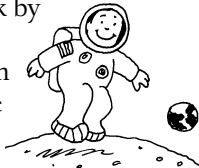


■ Snow Party

How do snow women, men, and children celebrate the first snowfall of winter? In Harriet Ziefert's story, they gather for a big celebration on the new-fallen snow. Dressed in colorful hats and scarves, the snow people sing, dance, eat, and exchange gifts. A fun read-aloud for a snowy day.

■ If You Decide to Go to the Moon

This nonfiction book by Faith McNulty takes your youngster on an imaginary trip to the moon. She will discover what supplies astronauts need, how it feels to blast off, and what it's like to land on the moon. Also includes scientific facts about the moon's atmosphere, temperature, and gravity.



■ Mitch and Amy

Twins Mitch and Amy have very different personalities, and they start most of their days by arguing. In this book by Beverly Cleary, it takes a school bully to bring the twins together—and to show them that their bond is stronger than they thought.



■ Big Red Barn

This classic rhyming story by Margaret Wise Brown is just right for beginning readers. Your child will meet farm animals and learn about other things on a farm, like scarecrows, cornfields, and weather vanes. (Also available in Spanish.)



How stories work

Knowing how stories are organized can make it easier for your child to understand them. Most books follow a familiar path: we meet the characters in the beginning, they face a problem in the middle, and the problem is solved in the end. Here are some activities that will let your youngster explore stories.



What's in a story? Read a book aloud, and ask your child to make a "story house" for it. She can start by drawing a house with four rooms and a triangular roof. Then, have her write the title on the roof and illustrate a different "story element" in each room: characters, setting, problem, and solution. When she reads books, thinking about the house can help her visualize what's in a story.

What's the order? Being able to tell what happened first, next, and last can improve your youngster's reading comprehension. Help her read a story. Then,

each of you can divide a sheet of paper into thirds and draw a different event from the story in each section—but place them out of order! Trade papers, cut the sections apart, and put the events in order. Finally, have her use the drawings to retell the story.

What will happen next? Encourage your child to use what she knows about stories to make predictions. Read a book, but pause before the problem is introduced. Can she predict what it will be? (She might look at previous pages for clues.) Then, stop before the book ends, and ask her to guess the solution. ♥

Stronger writing muscles

When your youngster holds his pencil correctly, writing is easier. He can strengthen his hand muscles—and enjoy writing more—with these tips:

- Have him write while holding a penny or marble between his ring finger and pinky. He'll think it's funny, but it will remind him that those two fingers don't belong on his pencil! Or he could try writing with a miniature-golf pencil or broken crayon—he will have less room for fingers that don't help with writing.
- Did you know it takes more strength and coordination to write on a vertical surface? Let your child give his hand and wrist muscles a workout by writing and drawing on a chalkboard, whiteboard, or large cardboard box. He could play school, or he might use markers to turn a box into a fire truck or castle. ♥



Poetry play

Can your youngster describe a tree in 17 syllables? Or use rhyming words to write a riddle? Making up poetry is a fun way to practice thinking and writing. Consider these ideas.

Haiku

A *haiku* is a 17-syllable poem in three lines. Let your child choose something outside, such as a pine tree. Then, take turns writing lines of a haiku about it. The first line has five syllables (“Tall,



green, and pointy”), the second has seven (“Standing in the dark forest”), and the last has five (“With sticky pinecones”). *Note:* He can dictate his lines to you if he’s not writing yet.

I Spy

Write an “I Spy” poem together. First, have your youngster choose a small item in a magazine picture (say, a star). Help him think of a pair of rhyming words

for it (shiny, tiny) and use them in a two-line riddle. (“I spy something bright and shiny. It’s high in the sky and looks very tiny.”) *Variation:* Suggest that he draw a picture with hidden objects and write an “I Spy” poem about it. For instance, he might draw a soccer ball in the sun.♥



Building words

Exploring prefixes and suffixes can help your child learn more words quickly and easily. Try this word-building game.

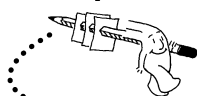
Materials: 18 index cards, pencil, 3 bowls



1. On separate index cards, help your youngster write six prefixes (*un, re*), six suffixes (*ed, ing*), and six root words (*wind, bake*). Put the prefixes, root words, and suffixes into three separate bowls.

2. Take turns drawing cards, one at a time, and try to make words. For instance, *re + wind = rewind*, and *re + wind + ing = rewinding*. (You can rearrange your cards at any time to make more words.) *Note:* If a root word drops an *e* before adding the suffix (*bake + ing = baking*), your child can cover the *e* with the suffix card.

3. When the bowls are empty, tally your scores. Earn 1 point for each word with a prefix or suffix and 2 points for each word with both. The high score wins.♥



Q&A

Successful read-alouds

Q My daughter doesn’t always want to sit still long enough for me to read her a whole story. What should I do?

A The first thing is to try to figure out why this happens. Perhaps the books have too many words on a page for her, or maybe there’s a better time of day to read aloud.

You might start with a book that has one sentence per page and work up from there. Then, experiment to find the best time to read. Your daughter may want to snuggle up with you right after school, or you could read while she eats a snack. Also, choose a spot without distractions. You might sit in the living room with the TV off or go out on your front porch or to a quiet park bench.♥



Parent to Parent

Let’s have a treasure hunt

My boys have always loved treasure hunts. I used to draw picture clues for them, but now that my younger son is starting to read, I decided to write clues so he could practice his new skills.

First, I hid one of their favorite books under a sofa cushion. Then, I hid a series of clues to lead them to the book. For example, I wrote, “Look under the thing that controls the TV.” Under the remote

control, I left a clue directing them to look under the milk carton, and so on.



The boys worked together to read the clues. It was cute to watch my older son help his little brother sound out words like “under” and “carton.”

When they found the book, we read it together. Then, I had them practice writing by making a treasure hunt for me!♥

OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children’s reading, writing, and language skills.

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